

HEALTH OF THE RURAL DISTRICT.

DR. MEYRICK'S ANNUAL REPORT.

The annual report of the Medical Officer of Health for the Rural District (Dr. Mbyrick) was read at the monthly meeting of the Rural District Council yesterday week. It was as follows :—

To the Chairman and Members of the Basingstoke Rural District Council.

Ladies and Gentlemen,—This is my fourth annual report that I have had to submit for your consideration dealing with the vital statistics and sanitary condition of the area under your control.

The total number of deaths registered in this district was 148, showing a death-rate of 12.1 per 1000, being a slight increase on that of 1904, which was 11.8 per 1000, but being a decrease on that of 1903, which was 14.4 per 1000; 31 were persons over 65 years of age, and, as usual, the largest number of deaths (viz. 52) took place in No. 4 district, which includes the Workhouse and Infirmary with its many cases of senile decay.

The death-rate of those under one year of age was 1.3 per 1000 of the births registered.

The birth-rate was 22.4 per 1000, a slight decrease on last year, which was 23.6 per 1000.

Of the zymotic or infectious diseases, 24 cases were reported, against 11 the two previous years and 34 in 1902. Of these 24 cases 5 were diphtheria, 5 erysipelas, 11 scarlatina, and 3 enteric fever.

In my monthly reports I have dealt with each case of infectious illness, its origin when traceable, and the means taken to prevent its extension; all cases were visited, isolated as far as practicable, and disinfectants used; therefore it is not necessary here to recapitulate these details. I might mention that the enteric fever cases were imported from Basingstoke, where an epidemic was prevalent.

There has been no feature in the incidence of disease in the different parts of the Rural District calling for remarks, beyond the fact that scarlet fever was present at some period in each one of the eight Union Districts, with the exception of Nos. 1 and 6; it was chiefly so in No. 5, viz. Stratfieldsaye.

An epidemic of measles occurred at Stratfieldsaye, which necessitated the closure of the schools for three weeks; also in consequence of the widespread prevalence of measles, brought back from the hop-fields and which very greatly diminished the children's attendance at school, so that I closed the schools of Wootton St. Lawrence and Pamber for a period of three weeks. I consider that the notification of this disease should be made compulsory, also that it should be the duty of School Masters and Attendance Officers to report any appreciable decrease in the school attendance, as it frequently happens that children are kept at home by their parents for what they consider a slight illness, but which may be in reality a mild form of one of the zymotic diseases, and as such may be conveyed in its most severe form to the remaining scholars through the medium of the brothers and sisters of the patient. The more promptly cases are reported, the better will be the prospects of checking disease, and the less will be the necessity of closing schools.

Inspections of dairies and bakehouses have been duly made, and instructions given for lime-washing and cleansing when necessary; the villages and schools have also received attention. During the year numerous inspections were made throughout the district, and any existing nuisances or sanitary defects dealt with, complaints investigated and improvements made.

The water supply of the district is from wells and tanks, and throughout the year was sufficient; several samples of drinking water were examined and found fit for domestic purposes.

The report, as in previous years, records the general health of the Rural District as having been very good, and concludes by stating that the general sanitary condition of the district has been maintained.

Inspection was made with a view to carrying out the provisions of the Factory and Workshop Act, 1901, and any necessary defects dealt with.

The report of the Sanitary Inspector, with a schedule of the work done in his department, is appended to that of the Medical Officer of Health, also Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4 of statistics required by the Local Government Board.

I am, Ladies and Gentlemen, your obedient servant,
P. R. HOLMES MEYRICK, B.A., M.D., B.C.H., ETC.,
Medical Officer of Health, Basingstoke Rural District.
Winton House, Basingstoke, Hants, February 17th, 1906.

For the Library B. M. J.

a surplice, a stole, and hood. He had been previously desired by the Bishop of St. Albans not to do so, and it was charged against him that he had taken upon himself to ordain, had publicly preached, and administered the 'Lord's Supper in an unconsecrated building without leave of his Bishop, and had disobeyed the Bishop's lawful commands. The defence was that the proceedings were not illegal, and that the respondent knew no law by which he was forbidden to ordain a man in the "Church Universal."

The Dean of the Arches, in delivering his judgment a fortnight ago, said there could hardly be a greater offence against the Church than that with which Mr. Fillingham was charged. Mr. Fillingham had had ample time to express his regret, but he had not done so, nor had he undertaken not to repeat the offence. The Dean then added that he would adjourn the further hearing. If in the meantime Mr. Fillingham satisfied him in writing that he acknowledged his offence and would not repeat it he would not pass sentence of deprivation.

Mr. Fillingham was present on Tuesday when the Dean took his seat.

Sir Lewis Dibdin said since the last hearing Mr. Fillingham had written him a letter saying he had come to the conclusion that he had better submit himself to the Court. He continued: "When I ordained Mr. White I did not know I was doing an illegal thing, no such case having arisen since the Reformation, as has been pointed out by the Court. Now you have decided what the law is, it would be utterly wrong for me to set up my judgment against your authority. I therefore humbly bow to your decision and frankly admit and regret my error." The Dean added that Mr. Fillingham in his letter said that he gave no pledge that he would cease co-operation with "the sister Churches" in fighting the danger of priestcraft. In view of the letter, said the Dean, he should not pass sentence of deprivation, but the case was one that must be the subject of severe censure. Mr. Fillingham had been guilty of an outrageous offence against the Church of England. The Dean went on: "I suspend Mr. Fillingham from office and benefice for two years. I admonition him not to offend again, either by repeating his act of so-called ordination, or contumacy against the Bishop of St. Albans' lawful commands, or intrusion into parishes in the diocese of St. Albans other than his own, by officiating or preaching therein without the Bishop's licence. The sentence of suspension will be made public on Sunday, March 12th, and will count from that date. Mr. Fillingham will also pay the costs of the case."

MR. BALFOUR'S RE-ELECTION.

Polling to fill the vacancy in the Parliamentary representation of the City of London, caused by the resignation of Mr. Alban Gibbs, took place on Tuesday, the candidates being Mr. Balfour and Mr. T. Gibson Bowles. Motor-cars and private carriages were lent by the supporters of both sides, and every effort was made to secure a heavy poll. Mr. Bowles visited all the districts during the day, but Mr. Balfour was absent, having contracted a cold. The result was announced at half-past ten the same night as follows:

A. J. Balfour (C.)	15,474
T. G. Bowles (Free Trader)	4,134

Unionist majority	11,340
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